

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 10-24 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 21, and 22 are independent. Claims 2-9 have been canceled. Claims 11-24 have been added.

Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited. An early and favorable first action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

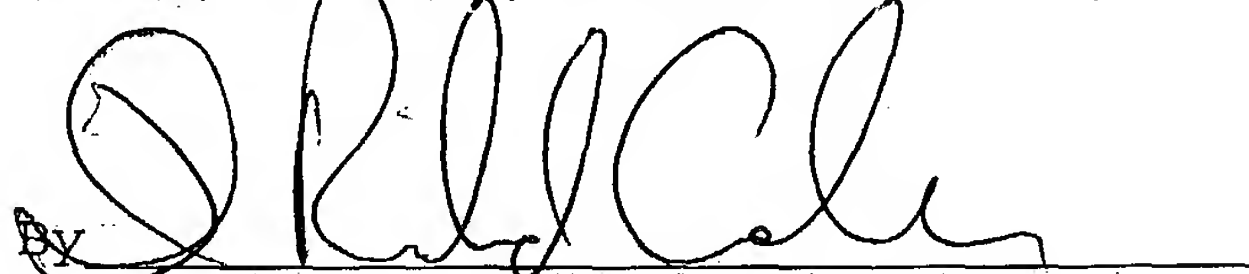
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Richard Anderson", is written over a horizontal line.

D. Richard Anderson, #40,439

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